



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

DIGITAL EDITION | MAY 8, 2024



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April Retreats Make
Gospel Impact
by Staff



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by Todd Sanders



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Written by Staff



Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) volunteers were in action responding to the outbreak of tornadoes in Oklahoma in late April and early May.

Oklahoma Baptist DR has been serving in hard-hit areas of the state, including Sulphur and Morris. On the morning of May 7, DR volunteers were serving in Barnsdall and Bartlesville to assess damage from devastating tornadoes the evening before.


According to Jason Yarbrough, state director for DR, teams serving have “seen significant fruit” while serving.

“We are trained, prepared and equipped to be able to serve people and communities at this great hour of need, all to demonstrate the love of Jesus,” said Yarbrough. “As we have been able to serve in the areas of debris clean-up, chainsaw work and meal preparation, we are also having Gospel conversations.”

Yarbrough, who said Oklahoma Baptist DR has averaged 170 volunteers serving daily, noted that there have been the following spiritual decisions/results:

- Three people have made a profession of faith;
- 40 Gospel conversations;
- 175 ministry contacts;
- 300 chaplain contacts; and
- 60 Bibles distributed.

In addition to this, Oklahoma Baptist DR has prepared 8,000 meals, offered 300 showers and done 140 loads of laundry. The ministry has received more than 150 requests for assistance across the state, to which they continue to respond.

For ministry updates, or to make a tax-deductible donation to help Oklahoma Baptist DR serve storm victims, visit www.okdisasterhelp.org. 

OKLAHOMA BAPTISTS' APRIL RETREATS MAKE GOSPEL IMPACT

Written by Staff

Falls Creek Spring Retreat reaches college-age students for Christ

More than 800 college students and young adults gathered April 12-14 for the Falls Creek Spring Retreat (FCSR). The annual event, geared toward college-age young adults, featured messages from Charlie Blount and Cris Lowery, with worship led by Bailey Byers. God was honored and friendships were formed and deepened as attendees participated in numerous breakout sessions. Sports tournaments, silent disco, meals and various late-night activities, as well as three large worship gatherings were enjoyed by all.



2024 Women's Retreat inspires participants

The Oklahoma Baptists' Women's Retreat 2024 was held on April 19-20, at Falls Creek as an event blended in-person and online experiences, welcoming women from Oklahoma and beyond. 2,100 women attended the retreat at Falls Creek. Forty churches opened their doors over the weekend for women to attend the retreat online. Speakers including Jen Wilkin, Whitney Capps, Tara Dew, and Dee Humphrey delivered a powerful message rooted in God's word and personal experience. A panel discussion hosted by Amy Cordova, featuring Jamy Fisher and Amy Petersen, fostered dialogue on the theme and how to live out scripture in community with each other. Josiah Presley, student minister at Edmond, North Pointe Baptist Church, shared his inspiring testimony as an abortion survivor.

2024 Men's Retreat propels men toward Christ

The 2024 Oklahoma Baptists' Men's Retreat that took place April 26-27 at Falls Creek propelled men toward Jesus. Nearly 900 men were in attendance. On Friday Night, Pastor Brian Mills of Yukon, TogetherWe gave an evangelistic push. On Saturday, Pastor Garry McNeill of Durant, First gave a challenging message geared to believing men to take sin seriously and to bear a powerful testimony. During both sessions, men came to Christ, rededicate their lives and received prayer. There were tons of activities and competitions for men to do during the retreat, including work heavy machinery with Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief (DR), archery, run a 5k and attend a Car Show. Leading breakouts were Pastor Tom Gragg of Little Axe, First, and Oklahoma Baptists' Evangelism Director "Coach Tee."



FALLS CREEK: THE TRUE 'GROUNDWORK' IS PRAYER

Written by Todd Sanders | Falls Creek Program Director

"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain." Psalm 127:1

Prayer is the true groundwork of a summer at Falls Creek. Churches commit. Leaders plan and lead. Students anticipate and take all the necessary steps to get there—ready for the Lord to do something in their life and in the life of their friends. But unless the Lord moves, all of that is empty of eternal worth.

So, even for all the planning, positioning, and preparation, it will be empty of spiritual power without the Lord doing what only He can do—saving souls and changing lives. The Lord moves when His people pray. We can do nothing of eternally significant worth without the Holy Spirit moving, so, prayer warriors, armor up. Prayer partners, join in.

Here are a few major areas you can pray for as Falls Creek Youth Camps approach:

Salvation

We want to pray for students to respond in a way that we have never seen before. Pray campers would find salvation in Jesus and respond to the great news of the Gospel.

Growth

We want to pray that students will take their faith seriously and grow spiritually through the interactions and conversations at camp, the breakouts, the quiet times and in cabin studies, the worship services, and the preaching and teaching of God's word. Pray students would be overwhelmed with God, desire to follow Him above all, and be less and less enamored with the world. Pray that 2024 would be a milestone marker in their spiritual journey and growth.

Will you pray for camp this summer?

Will you pray for students?

Will you pray for God to move?

Unity

We want to pray unity in the Spirit would be evident each week between students, leaders, and churches. Also, pray that the unity would spread back to impact the churches present, the communities they influence, and relationships between believers.

Advance

We want to pray for the Lord to call students to carry on Gospel advance and live on mission beyond camp. Ask the Lord to help students, leaders, and churches take seriously the responsibility we have been given to reach others with the Good News of Jesus. Also, ask the Lord to empower students called to the ministry to embrace, follow through on, and live out that calling throughout their lives.

You are an important player in what happens at camp when you beg God to do the work that only He can do.

Join with us in prayer for the important work that can happen through Falls Creek youth camp.

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WHAT IS A CHURCH REPLANTER?

Written by Rusty Gunn | Send Oklahoma Network

You may have heard the term “jack of all trades, but master of none.”

You may not have heard the seemingly less flattering phrase “equipped with knives all over, yet none are sharp.”

Some days, these phrases are applied to church planters. Yet neither of these truly describe the qualities of a church planter—or what I am describing here as a Church Replanter.

The term “Resourceful Generalist” is accurate. Let me explain. In the area of Replanting, a Resourceful Generalist is someone who leads out in various facets of church life with proficiency.

The Replanter will preach, teach, prepare and administrate budgets. The Replanter will formulate church calendars, supervise staff, give biblical guidance and counsel, lead meetings, cast vision, and perform many other administrative and spiritual leadership duties.

JimBo Stewart, associate director of replant at the North American Mission Board (NAMB) calls the work of replanting “a gritty and glorious work.” Unfortunately dying churches are often settling for “what they can get” when it comes to a pastor, feeling that they are unable to hire a top-shelf pastor to lead them back to health. According to Stewart, there is a new trend of God calling some top-notch men to the work of replanting. Instead of settling for mediocrity, struggling churches are increasingly embracing the prospect of transformation under capable leadership.

NAMB’s Replant Team has identified the following 13 essential characteristics of effective replanters:

Visionary Shepherd

Tactical Patience

Gospel Orientation

Initiative

Missional Focus

Emotional Intelligence

Organizational Awareness

Affinity for Multi-Generational Ministry

Pastoral Grit

Respect for a Church’s Legacy

Spousal Perseverance

Resourceful Generalist

Willingness to Confront

In Oklahoma, there is fervent prayer for God to call more and more men with these characteristics and the biblical qualifications of a pastor to the glorious work of replanting dying churches in our state. These servant-leaders are seen as catalysts for the advancement of the Gospel in communities where its light has dimmed.

For those sensing a tug towards this important ministry, NAMB’s Replant Team has an assessment process to help discern this call. You can take the first step in the process by taking the Replanting and Revitalizing Survey available at namb.net/church-replanting.

The task of replanting churches doesn’t rest solely on the shoulders of replanters. Healthy congregations play a pivotal role in nurturing and supporting struggling churches through the replanting journey. They also serve as incubators for future leaders, equipping and empowering them for the challenges ahead. NAMB has resources for these Kingdom-minded churches to learn more about their vital role in this ministry as well.

Mark Clifton, Executive Director of Church Replanting and Rural Ministry for NAMB is the author of *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches*. In the book, he shares different pathways for dying churches, six replanting imperatives and describes in more detail the 13 characteristics of effective Replanters.

Clifton will be preaching at the Oklahoma Baptists’ Pastor’s Conference on Nov. 11. Send Network Oklahoma is sponsoring the luncheon to cap off the Pastor’s Conference, and will feature Clifton and Stewart with opportunities to learn more about church revitalization and replanting strategies and opportunities. For more information about Replanting in Oklahoma, contact Rusty Gunn, Send Network Oklahoma Director, at rgunn@namb.net.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OBU Commencement:

Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) will celebrate commencement at 2 p.m., May 18 at Del City, First Southern. Ricky Dickson, recently retired CEO of Blue Bell Creameries after a 43-year career, will be the speaker. OBU also will continue the tradition of "The Walk" of graduating seniors at 3 p.m., May 16. The seniors will walk from the Oval, following the same path as their freshman walk, to the front steps of Raley Chapel. This year's commencement is the third at First Southern since the campus was extensively damaged by a tornado on April 19, 2023 and damaged Raley Chapel Potter Auditorium, the traditional location for the ceremony.

Pizza and Games at BRT.

The Life Principles group at Oklahoma City, Quail Springs brought pizza and home-made desserts to Boys Ranch Town on Sat., May 4. The class members also played pool, Corn Hole and a variety of table games—including Jenga, Sorry and Wahoo—with the residents and house parents. Here, class member Randy Kellogg shares insights with some of the boys as they enjoyed pizza.

Native Praise at National WMU:

The Native Praise choir will sing at the Women's Missionary Union (WMU) National Meeting on Sun., June 9 in Indianapolis. The gathering will begin at 12 p.m. in the Indiana Convention Center's 500 Ballroom. The appearance is officially part of the choir's 25th anniversary. Native Praise began in November of 1999. Instrumental in preserving Indian culture through the native Christian hymns passed down by ancestors. The Native American LINK ministry sponsors the choir, which numbers approximately 60 women of Native American descent or affiliated with Indian Baptist congregations throughout Oklahoma.



Upcoming Anniversaries:

Oklahoma City, Portland, Ave. will observe its 90th anniversary on May 19. A worship service featuring an address by former long-time pastor Walter Mullican will begin at 10:45 a.m., with a luncheon following in Fellowship Hall.

VOLUNTEER MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

Tulakogee Conference Center, Wagoner

918-462-3212 - info@tulakogee.com

The Spring, a faith-based shelter for women who are victims of domestic violence or human sexual trafficking and their children

Sand Springs - Mychaela Burriss - 918-947-4679

Hospitality House of Tulsa provides family centered lodging, emotional and spiritual support for family members of patients traveling to Tulsa for medical care.

918-794-0088 www.hhtulsa.org

Hospitality House of Oklahoma provides for the physical, spiritual needs of families with loved ones incarcerated in McAlester.

Lodging available. 918-429-0142

OK Jail & Prison Ministry needs volunteers to go into the jails and share the Gospel each week.

405-917-2242 or email: ojpm@ojpm.org

DISASTER RELIEF

Community Response Training

June 18-21, 2024

South Tulsa Baptist Church

Register online at www.oklahomabaptists.org/chaplaincy

Orientation/Credentialing

August 23-24, 2024

Kiamichi Baptist Assembly, Talihina, OK

Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

Chaplain Manual/OSFA Training

Naomi Paget, Instructor

September 12-14, 2024

South Tulsa Baptist Church

Cost is \$60.00 | To register, please email pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

Orientation/Credentialing

September 20-21, 2024

Southwest Baptist Assembly,

Lone Wolf, OK

Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

Assisting Individuals in Crisis (CISM)

October 24-25, 2024

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

South Tulsa Baptist Church, 10310

S. Sheridan, Tulsa, OK 74133

Cost \$50.00** To register, please email pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

(Continuing education for those who have completed Chaplain Manual and OSFA)

** For endorsed chaplains only